



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Washington, D. C. 20535

SEP 24 1999

Mr. William J. Maxwell  
Department of English  
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign  
608 Wright Street, South  
Urbana, IL 61801

Subject of Request: Claude McKay

FOIPA NO. 421391/190-HQ-1262051

Dear Requester:

Enclosed are copies of documents from FBI records. Excisions have been made to protect information exempt from disclosure pursuant to Title 5, United States Code, Section 552 (Freedom of Information Act) and/or Section 552a (Privacy Act). In addition, where excisions were made, the appropriate exempting subsections have been cited opposite the deletions. Where pages have been withheld in their entirety, a deleted page information sheet has been substituted showing the reasons or basis for the deletion. The subsections cited for withholding information from the enclosed documents are marked below:

Section 552

- (b)(1)
- (b)(2)
- (b)(3)
- (b)(4)
- (b)(5)
- (b)(6)

Section 552a

- (b)(7)(A)
- (b)(7)(B)
- (b)(7)(C)
- (b)(7)(D)
- (b)(7)(E)
- (b)(7)(F)
- (b)(8)
- (b)(9)

- (d)(5)
- (j)(2)
- (k)(1)
- (k)(2)
- (k)(3)
- (k)(4)
- (k)(5)
- (k)(6)
- (k)(7)

(See Form OPCA-16a, enclosed, for an explanation of these exemptions.)

Pursuant to your request, 119 preprocessed pages are being released.

The documents responsive to your request were previously processed for another requester. In order to provide the information you requested as soon as possible, we have released the FBI information as it was originally processed. We have not contacted other government agencies concerning their information in FBI files.

If you desire, you may appeal any denials contained herein. Appeals should be directed in writing to the Co-Director, Office of Information and Privacy, U.S. Department of Justice, Flag Building, Suite 570, Washington, D.C. 20530-0001 within sixty days from receipt of this letter. The envelope and the letter should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Appeal" or "Information Appeal." Please cite the FOIPA number assigned to your request so that it may be easily identified.

See additional information which follows.

Sincerely yours,

*John M. Kelso Jr.*

John M. Kelso, Jr.,  
Section Chief  
Freedom of Information-  
Privacy Acts Section  
Office of Public and  
Congressional Affairs

Enclosures (2)

## EXPLANATION OF EXEMPTIONS

## SUBSECTIONS OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 552

- (b) (1) (A) specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and (B) are in fact properly classified pursuant to such Executive order;
- (b) (2) related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency;
- (b) (3) specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than section 552b of this title), provided that such statute (A) requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a manner as to leave no discretion on the issue, or (B) establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld;
- (b) (4) trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential;
- (b) (5) inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency;
- (b) (6) personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- (b) (7) records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that the production of such law enforcement records or information (A) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, (B) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, (C) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, (D) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source, including a State, local, or foreign agency or authority or any private institution which furnished information on a confidential basis, and, in the case of record or information compiled by a criminal law enforcement authority in the course of a criminal investigation, or by an agency conducting a lawful national security intelligence investigation, information furnished by a confidential source, (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law, or (F) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual;
- (b) (8) contained in or related to examination, operating, or condition reports prepared by, on behalf of, or for the use of an agency responsible for the regulation or supervision of financial institutions; or
- (b) (9) geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.

## SUBSECTIONS OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 552a

- (d) (5) information compiled in reasonable anticipation of a civil action proceeding;
- (i) (2) material reporting investigative efforts pertaining to the enforcement of criminal law including efforts to prevent, control, or reduce crime or apprehend criminals;
- (k) (1) information which is currently and properly classified pursuant to an Executive order in the interest of the national defense or foreign policy, for example, information involving intelligence sources or methods;
- (k) (2) investigatory material compiled for law enforcement purposes, other than criminal, which did not result in loss of a right, benefit or privilege under Federal programs, or which would identify a source who furnished information pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence;
- (k) (3) material maintained in connection with providing protective services to the President of the United States or any other individual pursuant to the authority of Title 18, United States Code, Section 3056;
- (k) (4) required by statute to be maintained and used solely as statistical records;
- (k) (5) investigatory material compiled solely for the purpose of determining suitability, eligibility, or qualifications for Federal civilian employment or for access to classified information, the disclosure of which would reveal the identity of the person who furnished information pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence;
- (k) (6) testing or examination material used to determine individual qualifications for appointment or promotion in Federal Government service the release of which would compromise the testing or examination process;
- (k) (7) material used to determine potential for promotion in the armed services, the disclosure of which would reveal the identity of the person who furnished the material pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence.

MAILED. Comp. - 11-91

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACTS SECTION  
COVER SHEET

**SUBJECT: CLAUDE McKAY**

## NOTICE

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Instructions from Special Agent Charles J. Cullinan.

REPORT MADE AT: New York City	DATE WHEN MADE: 12/16/21	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE: 12/5/21	REPORT MADE BY:
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TITLE AND CHARACTER OF CASE:

IN RE: CLAUDE MCKAY.

FACTS DEVELOPED: At New York:

While engaged today I met McKay, one of the editors of the "Liberator" who stated that this publication may be compelled to discontinue publication on account of lack of funds, brought about by the fact that one of the trusted members stole over \$4000.

McKay further stated that he is still a member of a C. P. group and that he intends rejoining the I. W. W. because he owes about one year's dues in the I. W. W. I learned that Michael Gold is at the head of the above mentioned publication.

61-3497-1X

J. G. TUCKER

SPECIAL REPORT

DEC. 17, 1921.

3. INDIVIDUALS

CLAUDE MCKAY

Negro radical and one of the editors of the "Liberator," is said to have made the statement recently that this publication may have to suspend publication because of lack of funds, brought about by the embezzlement of \$4000. by one of the employees. McKay, at the same time, stated that he is still a member of the Communist Party and intends to rejoin the I. W. W.

DEPARTMENT MADE IN	DATE WHEN MADE	VEHICLE FROM WHICH MADE	REPORTER MADE BY
New York City	1-4-23	12-29	
TITLE AND CHARACTER OF CASE			
IN RE: AFRICAN BLOOD BROTHERHOOD Negro Activities.			

FACTS DEVELOPED:

While at Ray Baker's Office, 7 E. 15th Street, Room 401, he stated that he honors the African Blood Brotherhood because it is a true militant class conscious movement, which is not afraid to use guns, and that in the Tulsa riots last year the African Blood Brotherhood supplied the Negroes with the guns and lead in the fighting there, which might also be said of other race riots.

He was asked where he secured his information, and stated he has first hand information of this, but refused to divulge the name.

Baker is a close friend of Claude McKay, and it is believed this is his source of information.

Some months ago while placing Cyril Briggs under surveillance in connection with the African Blood Brotherhood, mention was made of Briggs going to a house on West 132d Street, with a man, who was described at that time, and that Claude McKay was also present at that time, and it is now believed that that man is one A. J. Friedman, who is now a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers Party of America.

190-1781-6

MR. JR.

July 21, 1933.

Mr. W. L. Hurley,

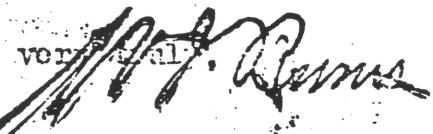
State Dept.,

Washington.

Dear Mr. Hurley -

According to information which I have received from a strictly confidential source, CLAUDE MC KAY, the well known radical of New York City, contemplates going to Europe next month.

Yours very truly,



J. Barnes  
Director.

61-3497-2X

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

November 1, 1922.

Dear Mr. Burns:

With reference to your letter of July 21, 1922, and previous correspondence relative to CLAUDE LE KAY, the well-known radical of New York, I have just received information from London to the effect that he is at present in that city. Nothing has been learned relative to his activities.

Very truly yours,

William J. Burns, Esquire,  
Director, Bureau of Investigation,  
Department of Justice,  
Washington, D. C.

THE AMERICAN  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
RIGA.

Riga, Latvia,

December 7, 1922.

No. 117

The Honorable,

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to forward herewith a report received through confidential sources concerning the attention being given the negro question by the Third International. The substance of the report was embodied in my telegram No. 204, of December 7, 1922.

I have the honor to be, Sir.

Your obedient servant,

Enclosure:-

F. J. B. COLEMAN.

"Third International and the Negroes."

Riga December 4, 1922.

THIRD INTERNATIONAL AND THE NEGROES.

The Fourth Congress of the Third International has given special attention to the negro question, having established a special committee for the organization of joint action of the American Communists and negroes against the American bourgeoisie.

The following American negroes are now participating in the Congress: J. Billings, Claude McKay, Sayesh and Johnston. They arrived in Moscow via Siberia.

Following a statement made by Billings at the session of November 25th, the Congress resolved to render the utmost assistance to the negro movement, to call a World Negro Congress in Moscow in 1923 and to begin an energetic propaganda among the negroes in America in order to attract them to Communist organizations.

The Negro Commission, which included the above-mentioned negroes and certain American and Russian Communists, resolved to organize, for the purpose of demonstrating the sympathies of the Russian proletariat for the negro race, special negro detachments in the Red Army and to begin an energetic recruiting campaign in the United States to enlist negroes for this purpose.

The chief of the Negro delegation from the United States is Billings. His assistant is McKay.

Billings, Sayegh and Johnston will return to the United States via Chita and Shanghai. They expect to leave Moscow between December 8 and 12. Mackay will remain in Russia as President of the Negro Section of the Executive Committee of the Third International.

LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
RIGA

Riga, Latvia.

December 11, 1922.

No. 138

The Honorable,

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

Adverting to my despatches No. 105, of December 4, 1922, and No. 117, of December 7, 1922, I have the honor to forward herewith the following translations from the Bolshevik press:

THE RACE QUESTION IN AMERICA.  
(Summary from Moscow IZVESTIA, No. 261, November 18, 1922.)

In this article the author embodies an interview with Claude McKay, an American negro delegate to the Fourth Congress of the Third International. The author states

Comrade Mackay is a journalist and poet; his specialty is agriculture." In his interview Mackay seeks to point out the inequality existing between the white and negro races in America. He is suspicious of the philanthropic activities of such men as Julius Rosenwald, intimating that, in educating the negroes, they endeavor to win their sympathies for the purpose of using them as strike-breakers. Comparisons of amounts spent by various states in the education of white and negro children are presented. Mackay refers to the "Back to Africa" movement, headed by Marcus Garvey, but states that it has yielded no practical results. He states that "the negro population must understand that a revolutionary movement will break out among them some time and it must begin on the territory where they live at the present time, i.e., in America." In conclusion Mackay states that between the white and negro races in America "there is no human, social contact .... We are not regarded as human beings."

THE RACE QUESTION IN THE UNITED STATES.  
(Moscow IZVESTIA, No. 259, November 16, 1922.)

This article likewise contains an interview with an American negro delegate to the Fourth Congress of the Third International, "Comrade Sayyah."

Sayyah gives various illustrations of the inequality existing between the white and negro races in America. He refers to the fact that there are separate waiting rooms in the railway stations; that the negroes have to

travel in separate railway cars; that in the cities they are forced to live in certain regions and that they are discriminated against by the workers masses and organizations. The negroes, especially in the South, he says, meet with great obstacles in the elections and the black farmers are unscrupulously exploited.

Sayach states that the economic situation of the negro makes him good soil for Communist propaganda, but that, unfortunately, the negroes are very poorly organized. In conclusion he points out that one of the foremost tasks of the Communists is the organization of the American negroes. The American Communist Party, he says, "will have to develop an energetic propaganda and organization work .... in order to include in the international troops of Communism a large new fighting unit - the laboring negroes of the United States.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W.W.B. COLEMAN.

Enclosures:-

Translations:- 1. "The Race Question in America."  
2. "The Negro Question in the United States."

THE RACE QUESTION IN AMERICA.

(Summary from Moscow IZVESTIA, No.261, November 18, 1922.)

Interview with Comrade Claude Mackay.

Comrade Mackay is a negro educated in America. At the present time he is in Russia where he is assisting in studying the negro question. Comrade Mackay is a journalist and poet, his speciality is agriculture. He was graduated from an Agricultural Academy.

In comparison with what Mackay tells us of the situation of the "colored" citizens of the "freest of all Republics" the situation of the Jews under the Tsarist regime and even now in Rumania would seem hardly worth attention.

The unequal rights of the "colored" are manifested everywhere and in everything. In a university no white student will tolerate the presence next to him of a negro student; negro children are not admitted to the school for white people; the teachers of the negro children are deprived of all pleasures of public life and have heroically to submit to ostracism.

The education of negroes depends entirely upon the activities of so-called "white philanthropists" mainly from the North and of their bureau in Cincinnati, which was established after the liberation of the negroes. This bureau prepares white teachers for the negroes who in turn educate teachers from

among the negroes. A capitalist by name of Julius Rosenwald opened 600 schools in the South and is going to open 400 more. It is interesting to point out that the same Rosenwald is the founder of the magazine "Urban League Bulletin". This magazine costs 15 cents but is given to the negroes free of charge. Its object is to agitate among the negroes and prepare detachments of "strike breakers" from among the dark masses of negro workmen. Naturally these gentlemanly Rosenwalds win the sympathies of negroes who, being thankful, help out very often when a strike breaks out. In such cases they are under the protection of the American police, whereas the latter prefers not to mix in when a lynching of a negro takes place.

It is also interesting to point out that the government spends for the education of a white child three or four times more than it expends on a negro; for instance in Alabama  $\frac{1}{2}$  9.41 are spent for the education of a white child and  $\frac{1}{2}$  1.78 for a colored child; in Georgia is expended  $\frac{1}{2}$  9.58 for a white child, and 1.76 for a negro; in South Carolina  $\frac{1}{2}$  9.59 is expended for a white child and  $\frac{1}{2}$  1.44 for a negro; in Louisiana  $\frac{1}{2}$  13.73 is expended for a white child and  $\frac{1}{2}$  1.31 for a negro child.

There are about 100 grammar schools and only about 3-4 colleges for the negroes in the Southern states.

It would seem natural that under such conditions the negroes would represent the most revolutionary

lement in the States. But the general situation in the United States must be considered. The negro, an oppressed slave, at the present time participates in no revolutionary movement and there can be no talk about any such movement among the masses of the dark classes-unconscious slaves whose life is entirely in hands of the white people. At the elections negroes usually vote for Republicans, whom they regard as their liberators, because that was their official watchword in the war between the Northern and Southern States. This war was as a matter of fact a war between the capitalistic North and the agrarian slave-owners of the South, but this question does not interest us. Recently a new movement broke out among the negroes, known under the slogan "Back to Africa".

"Is this movement something like the movement of the "Zionists"?

It resembles it a great deal. This movement has all the characteristic features of the Jewish zionists. The leader of this movement is a very capable agitator by name of Marcus Garvey, who arrived to New-York in 1917 from the British West Indies. He claims that his organization numbers already about 4,000,000 American negroes. He publishes a weekly with a circulation of over 60,000 copies. This movement represents also the interests of the American colored capitalists. A steamship line under the name of the "Black-Star Line" was organized with the object of carrying on trade with the negro tribes of the West Indies. Garvey issued shares worth \$ 5 each and by

so doing collected \$ 1,000,000 for purchase of steamers. The Company has now three steamers but has proved to be very inefficient from the commercial standpoint and at the present time exists only on paper. Nor has the "Back to Africa" movement yielded any other practical results. Safvey's organization has ever had a negative influence as far as the revolutionary spirit of negroes is concerned. The negro population must understand that a revolutionary movement will break out among them some time and it must begin on the territory where they live at the present time, i.e. in America.

Comrade Serezh stated that there are about 60,000 negroes engaged in such professions as lawyers, physicians, etc.

"What is the attitude of the white people towards these colored intellectuals? Will they come to them and consult them?"

"By no means! That is quite impossible under the present conditions. No white man will ever go to a colored doctor or lawyer. They work only for the negroes. You cannot understand it; you Europeans and especially you Russians (here Comrade Mackay became particularly emphatic). Perhaps you will understand if I say that there is no human, social contact between the white and colored people at the present time and under present conditions; will you understand it now? We are not regarded as human beings".

These words were the conclusion of our long interview.

Article signed by Bor. V. (Boris Volin, presumably - Note by Translator).

THE RACE QUESTION IN THE UNITED STATES.

Interview with the member of the Commission of the  
Fourth Conference of the Communist International,  
delegate of the American Communist Party, Comrade

Sayoth.

(Translation from the Moscow *IZVESTIA*, No. 259, November 16,  
1922.)

The American law makes no difference in general  
between the races, but in reality every negro in America  
feels that he is something lower than a human being.

The economic position of the huge negro masses  
(according to the statistics of 1920 there are more  
than 12,000,000 negroes in the United States) should  
make them good soil for our Communist propaganda. Un-  
fortunately that is not the fact in reality. In the  
first place negroes are very poorly organized. In the  
American Federation of Labor, which unites about 4,000,000  
people, there are hardly more than 20-30,000 negroes.  
About 90 percent of the negroes live in the Southern States,  
i.e. about 10,000,000 people. In the Northern States live  
about 10.5 percent or about 1,500,000 negroes and 0.5 per-  
cent live in the Western States.

Of the negroes living in the Southern States 73 per-  
cent are occupied in agricultural labor and 78 percent  
of negroes in the North are working in industry. Accord-  
ing to statistics of 1920, the social division of negroes  
was as follows: (1) engaged in agriculture - 2,895,575,  
(2) house servants and similar service - 1,222,231, (3)  
textile industry - 631,337, (4) in transport service -  
255,996, (5) mining industry - 61,129, (6) various pro-  
fessions - 61,245, (7) public service - 22,332.

The masses of negroes have not been able yet to get  
rid of their conception of white people. Three quarters

190-1781-6

of a century have elapsed since the liberation of the colored people but the attitude of the white people remains oppressive and humiliating. It is enough to point out that there are separate "waiting rooms" at the railway stations for the colored people.

Negroes have no right to travel in the same car with the white people and so forth. The white people play the role of oppressors, slave owners, although slavery is officially abolished. In the cities the negroes are forced to live in certain regions, because the landlords would not let their apartments to colored people, being afraid of losing all their white lodgers.

The working masses and organizations are also prejudiced against the colored people. But the attitude towards negroes is not the same throughout the United States. Race hatred is especially strong in the Southern States, although in the North a negro feels that he is something different from a human being. It often happens that after a strike the white workers betray their colored colleagues to the employer and do not protest at all if the unfortunate colored strikers are dismissed.

Negroes, especially in the South, where they compose the majority of voters, meet with great obstacles in the elections to Congress. There is some kind of a tax which is collected from the voters. Unequal economic conditions result in the fact that this tax (very small as a matter of fact) can be easily paid by the white voters, who are always better off than the colored, for whom even this insignificant

tax is too high. The black farmers are unscrupulously exploited, being in the majority of cases small to non land owners.

There is about 25 percent of illiteracy among the negroes in the South, whereas this percentage among the white people is almost nil. In Congress there is only one negro delegate - our comrade.

The great task of organizing the masses of negroes - millions of farmers and industrial workers - has not been yet commenced, the whole work is still ahead and the American Communist Party, after the Fourth Conference of the International, when the question will go through a detailed examination, will have to develop an energetic propaganda and organization work among our black comrades, to wipe out their suspicion and the last traces of prejudice in order to include in the international troops of communism a large new fighting unit - the laboring negroes of the United States.

We must create favorable conditions for struggle in the economic organizations, we must rely upon the support of our comrades, negro Communists, who can more easily penetrate the masses of the black laborers, since mistrust towards us, white people, is not yet completely wiped out. We must organize garm cells everywhere among our black comrades and make them starting points for our future work.

The question deserves a careful consideration which will be fully justified on account of the importance of the work and its results for the general success of the social Revolution.

Riga, December 11, 1932.

No. 143

The Honorable,  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to send the Department the following advance information in regard to the session of the Executive Committee of the Communist International to consider the negro question in America, which was held on November 28, 1932: Those present at the session were Bukharin, Billings, Johnston, Joes, Bonting (Bunting?), Ravenstein, Katayama, Takbaa, Malucca, Mackay, Kuusinen, Lackey and Safarov. A report of the minutes of the session have just been obtained through confidential sources and will be forwarded by next pouch.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

190-1781-6

GFR:JWM

December 12, 1922.

Mr. W. L. Hurley,

Department of State,

Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Hurley:

Please refer to the cable message which you received from the American Minister at Riga, dated December 5, submitting information concerning Saycsh, Johnston, Claude MacKay and J. Billings.

I would greatly appreciate being informed by your office as to the definite route which these individuals will use if they return to this country, in order that they may be given appropriate attention upon their entry. It is further suggested that you endeavor to find out whether or not passports have been issued to these subjects, and if so, I would appreciate photostat copies.

Yours very truly,

Director.

61-3497-2

3

**Department of Justice**

Bureau of Investigation

15 PARK ROW, 14TH FLOOR

NEW YORK, N. Y.

TELEPHONE, BARCLAY 8160  
POST OFFICE BOX 241  
GRANGE HALL STATION

Dec. 13, 1922.

Director,  
Bureau of Investigation,  
Department of Justice,  
Washington, D. C.

GENERAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION.

Re: Saysch, Johnston, Claude  
McKay and J. Billings - Repre-  
sentatives of the Fourth Con-  
gress of the Communist Inter-  
national, Moscow.

Dear Sir:

Referring to Bureau letter dated December 12th and initialed GFR, concerning the above named as taking part in the Fourth Congress of the Third International at Moscow you are advised that every effort possible will be made to detect the arrival of these men should they attempt to enter by this port and the immigration authorities will be requested to give them a thorough examination.

Your attention is respectfully called to the report submitted by Agent George J. Starr for December 9th, 1922, under caption "Re: Fourth Congress of Communist International," in which report it is set forth that Sashsa, or Saesha, is believed to be Claude McKay (colored) and that Billings is undoubtedly Housewood who at one time acted as a delegate from New York City to the Workers' Party Convention of District No. 2. Housewood is a negro and for a time managed the book store run by his organization in which he was reported as being quite active. He was also said to have been a close friend of Cyril Briggs and about a year ago was reported as being then in the East Indies. Under Housewood's management the Workers' Party book store showed a deficit of over one thousand dollars.

Claude McKay, who is a negro from the British West Indies, at one time acted as Associate Editor of "The Liberator." While in the United States he resided at 232 W. 138th St. He is a member of the Communist Party of America and a close friend of both Rose Pastor Stokes and Cyril Briggs. He is probably the negro who was referred to in the local papers as being present when Trotzky reviewed the Red Army in Moscow some weeks ago. It is further reported that when he returns to the United States he will join the staff of "The Liberator." McKay was reported to this office during the year 1921 as having been the confidential man of Sylvia Pankhurst during the time she published the "Dreadnaught" in London, England. He is considered a poet of ability and has

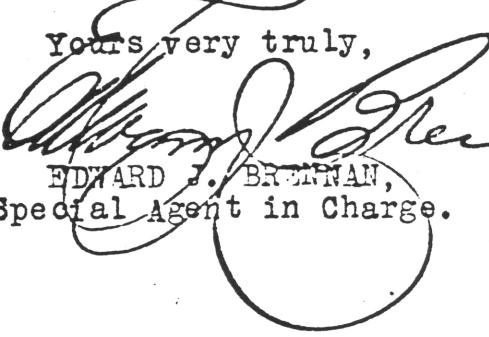
61-3497

written a number of radical poems for various publications printed in the United States and England. He left London, England, several years ago and came to New York where he remained for a period of about two years, departing a short time ago ostensibly for Russia.. He is not believed to be a citizen of the United States, is a strong advocate of the principles of Communism, but is opposed to the idea of the Party functioning under-ground inasmuch as he believes that in order to arouse the masses it is necessary to carry on as a legal organization. He is also a close friend of other prominent radicals in this city and while living in New York he had several meetings of Communists in his home which for a time was located at 20 East 131st St. According to a report received by this office, McKay is ~~Johnson's ex-wife~~. For a time he was also interested in the affairs of the I. W. W.

This office is at a loss to furnish any report concerning Johnston in the absence of that individual's first name. At first it was believed that it might possibly be Gabriel Johnson who was active in the affairs of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, but it has since been learned that that individual is now located in Monrovia, Liberia. As you are aware, this Johnson was featured by Garvey in his campaign in this city during the present year as the Imperial Potentate from Africa. I am causing a further investigation to be made of this matter and should any information be obtained of value, you will be advised immediately.

I am forwarding copies of this letter to both the San Francisco and Seattle offices of Bureau for their information in the event that any of the above named ship from Shanghai to the West coast of the United States.

Yours very truly,

  
EDWARD J. BRENNAN,  
Special Agent in Charge.

CJS:FJK

Ct Seattle  
San Francisco.

# On the Way to Petrograd

By ANISE 1-16-22

Bay of Finland, November 18, 1922

Dear Folks:

I'm on a steamer in the Bay of Finland, approaching Petrograd. Sitting up on deck writing this letter; would you believe it, after the middle of November. Father is with me; he is going into Russia for a few weeks to get famine information, while I am going to see all I can see of the Red Trade Union International and write you about it, and then take a trip south to the Donetz basin, the center of Russia's fuel problem, and perhaps to Baku.

We are about three days out from Berlin, on a German line that plies between Stettin and Petrograd. It is quicker than the train going to Petrograd, but a little longer, if one is going to Moscow. In spite of the season, we have had a delightful voyage, clear, not very cold, and smooth.

The steamer was built by the Germans in 1914, and captured by the Russians on the outbreak of war. It is now one of the few steamers owned by Germany, for it was returned last January, after the Entente had taken all the rest of Germany's shipping. When folks speak of Russia's "disregard for property," that is worth remembering. The Entente had plenty of hypocritical words to cover the seizing of Germany's ships, but they confiscated private property just as ruthlessly as the Russians ever did.

## RUSSIANS RETURNING HOME

There are several families with children on the ship, indicating that parents are no longer afraid to take quite young children into Russia but expect to be able to get proper food for them. There are also many Russians who have been prisoners and are coming home for the first time after eight years.

Americans think the war is over, but it isn't. Thousands of war prisoners all over Europe know it isn't. There are still thousands of Germans in the distant provinces of Russia and thousands of Russians in Germany, who have not been able to pay their way back again to their home lands and who have not even had letters to tell them if their people are living or dead. All Central and Eastern Europe is still clogged with war refugees and war prisoners.

## FRENCH HOLD RUSSIANS PRISONERS

One of these Russians tells me that there are thousands of Russians down in Algeria, held there by the French and without letters or papers or any communications from Russia. They were helping France on the western front in the early days of the war. Then came the Revolution and the Russians declared that their country was at peace now, and that they would also no longer fight. They were promptly jailed or interned, some of them taken to Algeria. And since France has no agreement with Russia yet, there is no way of arranging to bring them home.

Around this Baltic Sea through which we sail, there are no less than ten different languages spoken. And it isn't such a large sea at that. There is Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Russian, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, German and Danish. No doubt, if you hunted the villages, you would find some more dialects, but I am talking merely of regular languages, spoken by separate nations. Each of these groups has its own governments and passport regulations.

for Europe to recover.

Instructions received from Special Agent Chas. S. Kelly.

REPORT MADE AT:	DATE WHEN MADE:	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE:	REPORT MADE BY:
New York, N.Y.	Jan. 6, 1923.	Jan. 5, 1923.	James E. Amos.

TITLE AND CHARACTER OF CASE:

RE: CLAUDE McKAY:

Negro Radical Activities. Delegate to  
Third International.

FACTS DEVELOPED:

At New York, N.Y.

Agent called on and interviewed MRS. CYRIL BRIGGS, 2299 - 7th Avenue, N. Y. City. McKAY is a personal friend of MR. CYRIL BRIGGS, and MRS. BRIGGS has promised Agent that just as soon as she can get information from her husband as to when McKAY will return to America, that she will get in touch with Agent at once.

61-3497-4X

5

Instructions received from Special Agent Chas. J. F. Kelly.

REPORT MADE AT:	DATE WHEN MADE:	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE:	REPORT MADE BY:
New York, N.Y.	Jan. 6, 1923.	Jan. 5, 1923.	James E. Amos.

TITLE AND CHARACTER OF CASE:

RE: CLAUDE McKAY: Negro Radical Activities. Delegate to Third International.

FACTS DEVELOPED:

At New York, N.Y.

*Interview*  
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61-3497



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

January 11, 1923.

Dear Mr. Burns:

Please refer to your letter of December 13, initialed GFR:JWL, concerning Sayesh Johnston, Claude MacKay and J. Billings. As far as can be ascertained, these individuals have never received departmental passports. They, no doubt, went out and will return as sailors. In this connection I enclose herewith copy of a Despatch No. 143, dated December 11, which has been received from the American Legation at Riga.

Very truly yours,

Enclosure:

From Riga, No. 143,  
December 11, 1922.

William J. Burns, Esquire,

Director, Bureau of Investigation,

Department of Justice,

Washington, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

January 11, 1923.

Dear Mr. Burns:

With further reference to Saycsh, Johnston, Claude Mackay, and J. Billings, American negro delegates to the Fourth Congress of the Third International, I enclose herewith copies of the Despatches No. 117 and 138, dated December 7, and December 11, respectively, which have been received from the American Legation at Riga.

Very truly yours,



Enclosures:

Despatch # 117  
dated December 7

Despatch # 138,  
dated December 11.

William J. Burns, Esquire,  
Director, Bureau of Investigation,  
Department of Justice,  
Washington, D. C.

TEB:GA

January 19, 1923.

Mr. Roy A. Darling,  
P. O. Box 163,  
Seattle, Wash.

Dear Sir:-

Information has been received from a confidential source that four American negroes who have been participating in the Fourth Congress of the Third International, at Moscow, are now returning to the United States. The names of the four are given as J. Billings, Claude Mackay, Sayesh and Johnston.

The chief of the Negro delegation from the United States is Billings, his assistant being Mackay. It is reported that Billings, Sayesh and Johnston will return to the United States via Chita and Shanghai, leaving Moscow between December 8 and 12. Mackay is to remain in Russia as President of the Negro Section of the Executive Committee of the Third International.

Should these subjects return to the United States through a port in the territory covered by your office, it is desired that they be given a very thorough examination.

Very truly yours,



J. W. B.  
Director.

61-3497-7 outgoing

7

This case originated at Washington  
Journal to be made at originating office only. - A. File

REPORT MADE AT:	DATE WHEN MADE:	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE:	REPORT MADE BY:
Los Angeles	1/23/23	1/23/23	A.A.HOPKINS.
TITLE AND CHARACTER OF CASE:			
J. BILLINGS, CLAUDE MACKAY (Negro Delegates to ----SAYESH,-----JOHNSTON. 4th Congress. Third International)			<u>COMMUNIST</u> <u>ACTIVITIES</u>

FACTS DEVELOPED:

At Los Angeles Calif; - Attention MR HOOVER-2-

( Letter of Director  
Reference( Dated Jan 19-1923. T.F.B:G.A.(J.E.H)  
• ( Re'Negro Delegates to 3rd International.

With reference to the Negro Delegates to the Fourth Congress of the Third International reported now to be en route to the United States,: This matter has been taken up with the Immigration and Custom Authorities in all Ports of Entrance in this District, and request has been made that in the event any of these Delegates attempt to enter that they be held together with all baggage, documents etc, and this office notified at once so that a thorough examination may be made.

Confidential Informants in contact with the COMMUNIST PARTY OF AMERICA, and Confidential Informants on Negro Activities have also to been instructed watch out for subjects.

61-3497

8

Department of Justice,

Bureau of Investigation.

LEH:JDV.

Postoffice Box No. 374,  
San Francisco - California.

JANUARY  
29TH  
1923.

Mr. Wm. J. Burns, Director,  
Bureau of Investigation,  
Department of Justice,  
Washington, D. C.

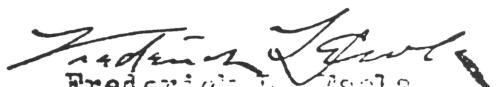
--- ATTENTION MR. HOOVER - 2 ---

Dear Sir:--

Receipt is hereby acknowledged of your letter under date of Jan. 19, 1923, initialed "TEB:G.", in re. J. BILLINGS, CLAUDE MACHAY, SAYESH and JOHNSTON, four American negroes who have been participating in the 4th Congress of the 3rd International at Moscow.

A similar letter on these same individuals was received by this office, same being dated Dec. 12, 1922, initialed "GFR:JWM", at which time the matter was taken up with the Immigration Authorities, confidential informants, etc., and should they arrive at this Port, this office should receive immediate notice and the matter will be promptly attended to.

Very truly yours,

  
Frederick L. Isola,  
Special Agent in Charge.

61-3497

TFB:GA

February 2, 1923.

Mr. F. A. Watt,  
P. O. Box 334,  
Portland, Ore.

Dear Sir:-

Please refer to my letter of recent date concerning SAYCSH JOHNSTON, CLAUDE MACKAY and J. BILLINGS, negroes present at a recent Congress of the Communist International, which is considering the negro question in America.

I have just been advised by the State Department that as far as can be ascertained these individuals have never received departmental passports. They no doubt went out and will return as sailors.

Very truly yours,

*J. A. B.*  
Director.

61-3497-15

TFB:GA

February 2, 1923.

Mr. Roy A. Darling,  
P. O. Box 163,  
Seattle, Wash.

Dear Sir:-

Please refer to my letter of recent date concerning SAYCSH JOHNSTON, CLAUDE MackAY and J. BILLINGS, negroes present at a recent Congress of the Communist International, which is considering the negro question in America.

I have just been advised by the State Department that as far as can be ascertained these individuals have never received departmental passports. They no doubt went out and will return as sailors.

Very truly yours,

Director.

61-3497 -P outgoing

12  
TEB:GA

February 26, 1923.

Mr. E. J. Brennan,  
P. O. Box 241,  
City Hall Station,  
New York City.

Dear Sir:-

Please refer to my letter of December 12, last, and your reply thereto of the 13th, concerning SAYECH, JOHNSTON, CLAUDE MACKAY and J. BILLINGS.

Please advise me whether you have been able to secure any further information upon any of these individuals, with particular reference to their citizenship, and if aliens, time and place of entry into the United States.

Very truly yours,

*W. F. D.*  
Director.

61-3497

Department of Justice

Bureau of Investigation

15 PARK ROW, 14TH FLOOR

NEW YORK, N. Y.

February 28th, 1923.

Director,  
Bureau of Investigation,  
Department of Justice,  
Washington, D.C.

GENERAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION  
RE: SAYSCHE, JOHNSTON, CLAUDE  
MCKAY & J. BILLINGS - Negro Communists  
and Possible Entrants at this port  
from Moscow. N.Y. File No.

Dear Sir:

Acknowledgment is made of your letter of February 26th, initialed TFB/CA, in which reference is made to your letter of December 12th, 1922, concerning the persons named in the above caption.

In this connection, I desire to advise you, as indicated in my letter of December 15th, 1922 that arrangements were then made at this port to have the Boarding Division keep a sharp lookout for the arrival of these men; and at the same time the offices of the Bureau at San Francisco and Seattle were also advised of their possible arrival. Since that time no information has been received regarding the arrival of these men nor their citizenship but the matter is still being kept in mind and upon receipt of any information regarding them you will be promptly advised.

Very truly yours,

EDWARD J. BREWER,  
Special Agent in Charge.

61-3497-16

J.W.

February 2, 1923.

MEMORANDUM.

IN RE: CLAUDE MCKAY

Claude McKay, a communist negro from Jamaica, is reported not to be a citizen of this country.

According to "Boston Herald" he came to the United States in 1912 in order to study scientific farming. He attended the Kansas Agricultural College for 2 years during which time he became interested in literature rather than in farming, and he has since worked at anything from dishwashing to dining-car service on the New York - Philadelphia Express.

By some he is classed as a poet. He has written for many publications printed both in the United States and in England, and is the author of "Harlem Shadows", a collection of radical poems.

In July, 1921 it was reported that he had returned from England, but there is no mention as to why or for how long he had been in that country.

Soon he became an assistant editor of "The Liberator"; an officer of the African Blood Brotherhood; and was also very active in Communist circles. He is closely associated with Rose Pastor Stokes, and is said to agree with her principles of Communism. He is, however, opposed to the idea of party functioning underground.

McKay is a friend of one Ryan, an I.W.W. engaged in selling forged passports in Germany, and was a confidential man for Sylvia Pankhurst during the time she published "Dreadnaught", in London, England.

In December 1921 it was reported that he contemplated rejoining the I.W.W. in which his membership had lapsed.

In August of 1922 he was living at 25 East 14th St., N.Y.C. Soon after this he went to Europe, and in November was reported to be in London. From there he went on to the 4th Congress of the 3rd International held in Moscow. *64-3497-68*

It was thought that he there used the alias of Sasha or Seisha. Other American negro delegates to this convention were Johnston, J. Billings and one Saysch. Billings was chief of the delegation and Subject his assistant. All but Subject planned to return to the U.S. via Chita and Shanghai, leaving Moscow between the 8th and the 12th of December. He, however, planned to remain in Russia as President of the Negro Section of the Executive Committee of the 3rd International.

LEGATION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
RIGA.

Riga, Latvia.

March 2, 1923.

No. 476

The Honorable,

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to forward herewith the translation of an article by Trotsky, published in the Moscow IZVESTIA, No. 54, of February 15, 1923, in which he answers certain questions propounded by the American negro Communist, Claude Mackay.

In the greater part of the article Trotsky dwells upon the necessity of instituting energetic propaganda among the negro troops so as to impress upon them that they are being used by France for the purpose of enslaving the proletariat of Europe and that French and

and British capitalists are planning to use the negro race, in case of necessity, against the revolutionary masses of Europe. Trotsky observes, however, that the bourgeoisie are conducting an experiment dangerous to themselves when they involve the less civilized colonial masses in international conflicts. He thinks that the negroes, as well as colonial natives generally, preserve conservatism and "mental immobility" only if they remain in their usual domestic surroundings and that when they are brought forth to sacrifice their lives for the sake of complicated international conflicts they are rendered more susceptible to revolutionary ideas.

Trotsky thinks that the most important revolutionary problem of the moment is the training of negro agitators. In America he thinks the problem becomes more complicated because of the "abominable stupidity and race hatred among the privileged circles of the working class itself". He calls for a "deadly struggle" against race prejudice, which he considers to be the best guarantee for the enslavement of the white and black workmen.

In conclusion, Trotsky admits that he is at a loss to offer advice concerning the most expedient forms of organization among the negroes of America, because he is "not familiar with the concrete conditions and possibilities."

I have the honor to be, Sir

Your obedient servant,

J.W.B. COLEMAN.

-3-

Enclosure: 1. "Answers to Comrade Claude Mackay."  
(IZVESTIA, No. 34, February 15, 1923.)

ANSWERS TO COMRADE CLAUDE MACKAY.

Article by L. Trotsky.

(Translation from Moscow INVESTIA, No. 34, February 15,  
1925.)

Dear Comrade Mackay:

(1) what can be practically done in order to prevent France from using colored troops on the European continent? That is your first question.

Agitation must be carried on to this effect among the colored troops themselves. Their eyes must be opened and they must understand that in helping France to enslave Europe the colored people enslave themselves by supporting the rule of French capital in the African and other colonies.

In this educational work among the colored people the working class of Europe is very much interested and in the first place the French and German laborers. The time of general resolutions concerning the rights of colonial nations for selfdetermination, the equality of all nations regardless of the color of their skin, etc. etc., has past. Now the time of direct action has come. Every ten negroes gathered under the revolutionary banner, united for practical work among the colored people, are a hundred times more important than ten general resolutions, which have been so generously passed by the Second International. A party which would limit its activities in this respect by idealistic declarations, not showing any effort towards the practical enlisement of class-conscious negroes for carrying on of its

program would not deserve to be called a Communist Party.

(2) There can be no doubt that the fact of involving the colored troops in the imperialistic war and at the present time in the occupation of German territory represents a carefully worked out and executed attempt of European, and in the first place of French and British capital, to find for themselves a force outside of chaotic Europe and by so doing to obtain the possibility of finding support, in case of necessity, in the mobilized, disciplined and armed African and Asiatic troops against the revolutionary masses of Europe. That is why the question of involving colored troops in imperialistic wars is closely connected with the question of revolution in Europe and, therefore, with the fate of the working classes.

(3) There can be no doubt that the fact of involving the less civilized colonial masses in international imperialistic conflicts represents an experiment most dangerous for the ruling bourgeoisie itself. The black people, as well as the colonial natives generally, preserve conservatism and "mental immobility" only if they remain in their usual domestic surroundings. But when the hand of capital and even more - the hand of militarism - pulls them out of their usual living conditions and compels them to sacrifice their lives for the sake of complicated and now international questions and conflicts (conflicts between the bourgeoisie of various nations, or conflicts between the classes of the same nations,) then the conservative psychological stubbornness is immediately wiped

out and the revolutionary ideas are grasped by the disturbed minds.

(4) That is why it is so important now, at the present moment, to have even a small number of class-conscious negroes, young and devoted, interested in the improvement of the economic and moral level of the black race and at the same time capable of connecting morally its fate with the fate of the whole world and, in the first place, with the fate of the international working class.

The Training of the Black Agitators is the Most Important Revolutionary Problem of the Moment.

(5) This problem becomes more complicated in the United States of America on account of the abominable stupidity and race hatred among the privileged circles of the working class itself, which do not want to recognize negroes as brethren in labor and struggle. Gompers' policy is based entirely on this prejudice and up to the present time is the best guarantee for the enslavement of the white and black workers. Dandly struggle against this policy must be carried on everywhere. One of the most important methods of struggle against this capitalistic corruption of minds is to wake up the human dignity and revolutionary protest among the black slaves of American capital. This work can be best carried on by the devoted and politically educated negro revolutionists. Naturally the work must not assume the character of "black chauvinism" but must be carried on in the spirit of solidarity among all laborers regardless of the color of their skin. I am at a loss to say what are the most expedient organization forms for the movement

among the American negroes because I am not familiar  
with the concrete conditions and possibilities. But  
the organization forms will be found as soon as suf-  
ficient will for action is displayed.

With communistic greetings,

(Signed) L. Trotzky.

COPY

AMERICAN LEGATION

Copenhagen, COPENHAGEN, 1923.

Rec. 375

A true copy of  
the signed circ-  
ular  
GH

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report, confirming my telegram No. 6, March 8, 3 p.m., that my French Colleague, Vicomte de Fontenay, informs me, from official information received by him, that one Claude Mackay, an American negro, who has just graduated from the Bolshevik school at Moscow, has been especially delegated by the Soviet Government for propaganda among the North American negroes. In an open letter, which recently appeared in IZVESTIA, Trotsky has published the official instructions given to Mackay for the organization of the black race in the United States against their "American oppressors". I am informed that Mackay is calling at once for the United States.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

John Hydeley Prince.

ANSWERS TO COMRADE CLAUDE MACKAY.

Article by L. Trotsky.

(Translation from Moscow INVESTIA, No. 34, February 15, 1925.)

Dear Comrade Mackay:

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